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TRANSCRIPT

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FACE THE NATION

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GUEST:

GEORGE H. W. BUSH
Vice President of the United States

CORRESPONDENTS:

George Herman - CBS News, Moderator
Michael Getler - The Washington Post
Robert Pierpoint - CBS News

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MR. HERMAN: Vice President Bush, you have been touring through Europe talking about the question of negotiating zero option or reduction in the intermediate range nuclear missiles. Is it your own personal feeling that it can be accomplished, that it will be accomplished, in time to prevent the deployment of the Pershing II missiles next December?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, first place, we are very serious about arms reduction and about negotiation to achieve arms reduction. I can't make a prediction on exactly when it will happen, but I would say it's a distinct possibility that it will happen, because we found the Alliance together, we found them sticking with the two tracks, and so all I know is that our negotiator, Mr. Nitze, is there saying, "Come on, let's see a good proposal," and, yes, it can happen.

ANNOUNCER: From CBS News, Washington, a spontaneous and unrehearsed news interview on FACE THE NATION, with Vice President George Bush. Vice President Bush will be questioned by CBS News National Security Correspondent, Robert Pierpoint; by Michael Getler, National Security Reporter for The Washington Post; and, by the Moderator, CBS News Correspondent George Herman.

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MR. HERMAN: Mr. Vice President, when you talk about a two-track system, I presume you're talking about negotiating while continuing to deploy these new weapons, the Pershing II's?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes.

MR. HERMAN: That extends the time a little bit. It's going

to take what, two years to deploy the Pershing II's? They won't be fully deployed until sometime in 1985?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes.

MR. HERMAN: Although this is a serious matter, let me put it in sort of a -- if you were a betting man, would you bet that all the Pershing missiles will be deployed, or will (sic) you think that there would be some agreement before that process is through?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: I wouldn't bet one way or another, but I would say that that negotiating track, the willingness to stay at the table as long as it takes to reduce, and hopefully to achieve what we want, moral and elimination of an entire generation of these nuclear weapons, I believe will -- I believe will be successful in negotiation. Can't put a time frame on it, but as I said in Europe, what goes in can come out.

If we are compelled to deploy because the Soviets are not as forthcoming as our Allies would like to see them, we will continue to negotiate, but that deployment date, Mr. Herman, is set, and we are not going to vacillate and pull away from it. It is firm, and one thing I've found where the Allies were together on that.

MR. GETLER: Mr. Vice President, now that you've talked with the President about the results of your trip, you've presumably given him some judgments of your own, can you tell us whether there is likely to be any new American initiative perhaps for some intermediate steps to break the deadlock at the Geneva arms talks, or whether the Russians must take the next step?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, Mr. Getler, as you know from your

incessant travels around Europe, our position is that they should come forward with a new and reasonable proposal. We think the proposal they made -- and our Allies totally agree -- was unreasonable. But I have reported in confidence to the President, and he will be making a determination whether we should do something different in order to encourage the Soviets to do what we've asked, but we are not going to depart from this moral objective, ridding the world, if you will, banishing forever an entire generation of these weapons.

I can't tell you -- I have had adequate opportunity to report to him and with the Secretary of State there, and what the President will determine on this, I just don't know.

MR. PIERPOINT: Mr. Vice President, when you were in Geneva, you met with the Soviet disarmament delegates. Did they give you any reason for believing that they would in fact ever accept this so-called zero/zero option?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: No, they did not, Mr. Pierpoint. I would be misleading the public if I said there was -- out of those conversations there was reason to be hopeful. But as you look at the equation, as you look at the capabilities of these Pershings and Cruise launch missiles, those ground launch Cruise missiles, there is every reason to feel that the Soviets would want the kinds of reductions we're talking about, but I did not get that directly from talking to the Soviet negotiators.

MR. PIERPOINT: When you talk about reductions now, you're not necessarily then going to stick to this zero/zero option, and especially if the Soviets have made it clear to you that they won't

accept that, so we might go back to Mr. Getler's question: What is the United States going to do? Is it going to be stuck on dead center, or is it going to make a compromise proposal?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, in the first place, in terms of the proposal of eliminating this entire generation of weapons, as I went across Europe and talked to opposition leaders and talked to government officials, heads of government in every country, I never heard one argument against the zero option, except that the Soviets don't like it. The Soviets won't do it. Now, that is not a good enough reason to depart from an objective that the Alliance shares, that the peace movements ought to share if they'd put it into focus, how much better a major reduction than a freeze, for example.

So I -- maybe there is a way, an intermediate way, to get from here to an objective that every thinking person, including the Soviets, should share, and it is that that the President is considering right now, bringing home in confidence to him suggestions from the world leaders.

MR. GETLER: Just when do you think -- coming back to your first answer, Mr. Vice President, when do you think the President might decide whether or not this country or the Western Alliance ought to do something to encourage the Soviets to go further than they have?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: I don't know when he'd decide, but I can tell you that whatever was done, if anything, would be done in full consultation with our Allies. The one -- not the one, but a good thing out of this trip that I've just finished is that I think the European Allies understand that we were operating in the true spirit

and letter of the word consultation.

MR. GETLER: One of the things that the Europeans, as you know, also are very concerned about is the question of whether there will be a summit meeting between President Reagan and the Soviet leader, Yuri Andropov. Again, since your return, since your discussions abroad, and now that you have some feeling from the President about these matters, has that been advanced at all? Is it any more likely now that there at some point is going to be a summit meeting?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, I wouldn't say that the trip itself accelerated or decelerated the need for a summit, but if I could be permitted just a couple of seconds, it was President Reagan that said to Brezhnev, "I'd like to meet you at the U.N. on a casual basis." It was President Reagan who has said he is prepared to go to well-prepared summits. So, in other words, we don't lift the hopes of a world desiring arms reduction only to have them dashed down because of failure to prepare.

And, as we said in Germany, which got the zero option back on focus, "I'll drop everything. I'll stop anything ongoing, go anywhere, anytime, to sign an agreement to eliminate an entire generation of weapons."

So there are three kind of guidelines, you might say, and each of them leads to the fact that our President, under certain conditions, would be willing to meet with Mr. Andropov. Some in Europe felt he wouldn't do it at all.

MR. PIERPOINT: Mr. Bush, if I may play the devil's advocate for a moment, or the Soviet Union's advocate in this, Mr. Andropov has

proposed a rather vague plan that would allow the Soviets to keep a number of missiles equivalent to the missiles, nuclear missiles, now in France and Great Britain. That does sound on the surface like a somewhat reasonable proposal, since Britain and France are America's Allies. What is your answer to that?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, our answer is that the British and French systems -- first, they're sovereign systems, and we've always been talking about U.S./Soviet balance. Secondly, they're strategic systems, not intermediate nuclear force systems. And, thirdly, what would happen if we did that, we would be decoupling -- we would be decoupling a U.S. guarantee from Europe, pulling ourselves away from our Allies by that. And so these objections are objections that the Soviets have understood in the past in previous -- in other negotiations, and we are not about to count the British and French systems as we reach for this moral end.

MR. PIERPOINT: But don't they have a certain justification in their view by saying that after all, whether you call them strategic or intermediate range nuclear missiles, whether they're fired by NATO as a unit, or whether they're fired by the British and the French, Moscow is going to be just as vulnerable, just as many Soviet citizens are going to be dead?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Sure. And when you look at them in terms of the total deadly megatonnage of warheads, yes, they should be counted. They're a fraction, just a tiny fraction, of the full total, but somewhere along the line -- and when we -- if one can ever finally resolve the whole question of all of nuclear disarmament, yes, they

should be considered, but they ought not to be injected into the intermediate nuclear force discussion when they've never been in there before, ought not to be injected as a way to forestall an objective that the real -- the entire world should welcome, getting rid of all of these weapons.

MR. GETLER: Mr. Vice President, did the European leaders that you spoke to ask you if President Reagan is going to run again? Is that on their minds? And I ask this because -- as a question of whether it's a factor in the Soviet negotiating strategy in arms control, whether they wait and see what Reagan does.

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: No, they didn't ask, but I'll bet you they were all very interested. We tried on this trip to stay out of European elections, elections in France, the elections in Germany. I hope I was successful, and they very tactfully did indeed in our consultations stay out of any discussion of election politics, but I think they're -- I think they're keenly interested in that.

MR. HERMAN: Mr. Vice President --

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: It didn't come up, though.

MR. HERMAN: I'm sorry. Let me ask you a question. I've been sort of fascinated by some of the -- you'll pardon my saying so -- high-flow rhetoric in this, "banish an entire generation of weapons."

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes.

MR. HERMAN: "Banish from the face of the earth an entire class of nuclear weapons," and so forth. Does that mean that if a zero/zero option agreement were reached, that any Pershing missiles which had been built in the United States would be dismantled or

destroyed?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Sure. If that's the kind of agreement we can reach, absolutely, and so would the SS-20's, and so would the 4's and 5's. Now, that leads you to any such agreement being verifiable, but absolutely, that is the President's -- and it is high-blown rhetoric, but it's a worthy thought in a world that's troubled by this frightening nuclear threat, and we want reduction, not a freeze, we want a reduction, and if the rhetoric is high-blown, fine, because we're dealing with morality here.

MR. HERMAN: Let me take you beyond the rhetoric for just a moment. I don't see reasonably how you can separate one class of nuclear weapons totally in negotiations from another. If you have tactical, if you have intermediate --

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes.

MR. HERMAN: -- if you have strategic, they're really all part of the question of the death of the earth in a nuclear exchange. Are you satisfied that progress is being made, that the Russians are seriously interested in reducing the threat of nuclear death of earth?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: I would think they would be, yes. I don't see how any country, especially one that's had it's -- has lost many soldiers, as they have, in various wars, would be disinterested in reducing the -- this threat.

MR. HERMAN: Are they showing it?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: But they are not showing it, and they are being very iron-willed, and part of the reason they're not showing it is because they think they can win a propaganda battle and keep us from

doing that other track, that deployment track, of the NATO decision, and they've focused on public opinion, they've highlighted their positions in terms of injecting themselves into the German elections, and I think it's going to backfire on them. But, clearly, if they can have the status quo, where they have twelve hundred intermediate nuclear force warheads and we have zero as an Alliance, they would like that.

Our President and the Allies, the heads of Allied governments, are determined that that monopoly not continue to exist. And they have a monopoly, and that's not reasonable and it's not conducive to peace.

MR. HERMAN: Let me take you from nuclear weapons to pistols, namely the confrontations that we've seen between American Marines in Lebanon and the Israeli troops and tanks there. Are you worried about the possibility of some kind of clash disturbing the peace in Lebanon, slowing the process of getting a withdrawal from that country?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes, I'm concerned about it. I'm not concerned about a clash with Marines, necessarily, but I think that event did highlight the need to get on with the withdrawal of all foreign force, and that means Syrians, that means PLO fighters, that means the Israelis from Lebanon.

MR. HERMAN: What's the problem? What's holding it up?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, there have been all kinds of things holding it up, including at one point whether a peace treaty between Lebanon and Israel was a sine qua non, was necessary to do this, security guarantees that one side is asking, so there are several

specific problems, but I think the over -- there is now a kind of a realization that we must have this withdrawal.

And the way we look at it, it's just a step. We want to see Lebanon be Lebanon, if you will, reconstituted, free, controlling its own destinies, free of foreign force, and then we want to get on with a solution to the age-old Palestinian question. Our President put forward a proposal; he's going to stick with that proposal.

MR. PIERPOINT: Mr. Vice President, Philip Habib, the roving ambassador, is now back in the Middle East, and we understand that he has gone with a plan to let Lebanon be Lebanon in degrees by sending more foreign troops into Lebanon, including more Americans, perhaps doubling the amount of U.S. Marines there while the Israelis and the Syrians withdraw. Is that the case?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, I won't go into the specifics of the plans, but I think we would do what the U.S., along with others -- it has to be multi-lateral, have to have others cooperating -- is necessary to do in order to cause this separation of force, in order to help be a catalyst for getting foreign force to a withdrawal. But the specifics, I can't give you those.

MR. GETLER: Mr. Vice President --

MR. PIERPOINT: Can you just tell us whether more U.S. Marines are as a part of the plan?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: No, I can't. I can't give you that, but I've read the same stories you have and all I'm saying is we want those foreign forces out. An environment with those foreign forces out would be more benign, and I can't say what we will do to fulfill

our part in such a withdrawal.

MR. GETLER: How concerned are you, sir, over the general direction in which American/Israeli relations are going now? The incident between the Marines and the Israeli troops is something that I think the American public has just never seen before, never been exposed to. It has an edge of nastiness to it that -- that I think concerns a lot of people. Where do you -- is this getting out of hand? Where do you see things going in terms of the overall relationship?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: I don't see it getting out of hand, but I share your hypothesis that it's a matter of great concern. Israel is a staunch ally. Israel is an ally for cultural and traditional and strategic reasons. But we have -- there have been differences with Israel, just as we've had differences with Arab countries.

So I do worry about it, frankly. I worry about it very much, and I think the best way to facilitate an improvement of relations would be to have the kind of withdrawal from Lebanon we've been talking about.

MR. HERMAN: Does the Administration think the change in the Israeli government and the Israeli cabinet, the change of portfolio of Defense Minister Sharon has any impact?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Mr. Herman, I'm going to fall back on an old diplomatic -- not dodge, but we shouldn't talk about the internal affairs of Israel. That wouldn't be proper, how their cabinet is made up, and it is a matter of -- it's widely debated, but I just can't help you on that one.

MR. HERMAN: Well, let me take it another way. Do you think that there is a momentary disarray in the Israeli government which could slow things down, negotiations, for example?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, I wouldn't think it would slow down the negotiations, but I just -- I don't know, I have to reserve on that. I don't think it will, because I think there is an urgency now, and I think Mr. Begin sees it, I know we feel that, and I know that Gemayel in Lebanon feels that way, so I hope it wouldn't slow down negotiations.

MR. PIERPOINT: Mr. Vice President, I'm not going to be quite as tactful as the Allied leaders as you met with in Europe. I'm going to ask you is President Reagan going to run again, and if you don't know the answer, could you tell us when you would like to know the answer?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: I don't know the answer, but I have a strong gut feeling that he's going to run again. I've said it before, I'll say it again, and I'll add to it, he should run again. I think it's very, very important that he do run again.

MR. GETLER: Do you have any idea, sir, when an announcement either to run or not to run will be made?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Hey, listen, I got in trouble with some White House hotshots a few months ago for giving the Bush view on all that, and I really think that the President is competent of making this determination.

MR. GETLER: No, no, obviously, he is, but I mean the question of timing affects so many things in foreign policy, economic policy,

and everything else.

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: That was the original Bush position. I've changed it now to say that -- because the signals are out there.

MR. HERMAN: It's no longer operative?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: No. Well, the signals are there. Paul Laxalt's up there. He wouldn't be there if he didn't feel the President was going to run, so after that Laxalt announcement, I said to myself, "Well, look, if there's anything that makes clear the President's intentions as of now, it's that, and, Bush, there's no point you getting caught up in when somebody ought to do something."

MR. HERMAN: Speaking of original positions and getting yourself in trouble, Mr. Bush, would you care to discuss voodoo economics at this point, in the sense that your reference was to the difficulty -- I believe you thought the impossibility -- of cutting taxes, increasing defense spending, and reducing the deficit? And you proved to be right, that is, that it has been difficult.

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, I had differences with President Reagan in terms of economic formula until the fall of 1980, when we were on the ticket together and he came out, as you may remember, in Chicago, with a detailed economic plan that I enthusiastically agreed with and campaigned for. So that is the way I would answer it, and, believe me, everybody asks.

MR. PIERPOINT: Well, what about the \$200 billion deficit that is now --

MR. HERMAN: That's why I maintained that you turned out to be right.

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, I think the \$200 billion deficit is too big, but so does the President, but I would --

MR. PIERPOINT: Isn't it --

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: May I finish? But I also think, though, is that the inflation rate at 3.9 is better than twelve-and-a-half. I heard Mr. Mondale. They said, "What do you do if you get elected President?" You know what he said? "Bring down interest rates." Do you know where they were when we came in? Twenty-one percent. And he'd bring down interest rates? My gosh. I mean, I believe that many of the things that the President said were going to work are working. They're helping the poorest families -- dramatically. A person with a \$15,000 income is far better off.

Now, those that don't have a job aren't, but let me give you one other thing: The reduction in unemployment for January was the equivalent of a \$5 billion jobs bill, just that kick from 10.8 down to 10.4. Now, that is dramatic recovery, and Reagan is right on the mark in terms of how this economy should recover.

MR. HERMAN: Do we need -- will there be an additional jobs bill?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: I think there will be some compromise, and you've heard and most of your listeners I think know, that the President has gone up there, not to depart from fundamentals, but to maybe accelerate some kinds of already committed funds that will impact on those that are out of work today. But there won't be any make-work stuff.

MR. HERMAN: Let me bridge our first and apparently last

subjects with a question that's sort of between the two. Is the MX missile deal?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: You have to --

MR. HERMAN: Or extremely ill?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: No, I don't think so. I really don't think so.

MR. PIERPOINT: I want to go back to --

MR. HERMAN: What do you think is going to happen?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, I can't make a prediction. I know a little bit about the deliberations of the Commission. Let's wait and see what the Commission says.

MR. PIERPOINT: I want to go back to the political signals that you brought up. How do you read the political signals being put out by Senator Howard Baker when he says that he's not going to run for the Senate again?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: I take Senator Baker at his word. He's interested in running for the Presidency. I don't think the position he's taken today has anything to do with running for President in 1984.

MR. PIERPOINT: You don't think it's a signal to Mr. Reagan that he'd better make up his mind pretty soon what he's going to do?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: I take the Senator at his word. He says no, it's not, and I believe him, and maybe I'm too -- maybe I'm a guy that goes along with what people say, but I see no reason to challenge the word of the Majority Leader. I think he's telling the truth.

MR. GETLER: Let me take you to another large, unresolved story, and, namely, whether you learned anything on your trip more about the alleged connections between the Bulgarians and the attempted assassination of the Pope, and also a second part of it, which is purely speculation but it's surfaced now, and that is that the United States may be downplaying this because it essentially would make it impossible to deal with Mr. Andropov, who is a former KGB leader.

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: We're not upplaying it or downplaying it. It's in the courts. The courts will do their job. We are very interested to see the truth come out on this matter. It's a matter of conscience. It's a matter that's shaken the entire world, these allegations, but we reserve enough fair play to say that it's in the magistrates over there, their hands. They are credible, they will do a good job, and that's as far as we go.

But the idea that we don't want the truth to come out is absolute hogwash, total.

MR. HERMAN: How about the part of Mr. Getler's --

VICE PRESIDENT: And I didn't hear -- I didn't get into those discussions.

MR. HERMAN: -- the premise that if we did find something of this sort, it would make dealing with Mr. Andropov more difficult?

VICE PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, I've got to be candid. I mean, if your hypothesis is if he personally was involved, clearly, it would be difficult. The Holy Father, the Christian head of a great faith?

MR. HERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Bush. I'm sorry, at this point we're out of time. Thank you for being our guest on FACE THE NATION.

ANNOUNCER: Today on FACE THE NATION, Vice President George Bush was interviewed by CBS News National Security Correspondent, Robert Pierpoint; by Michael Getler, National Security Reporter for The Washington Post; and, by the Moderator, CBS News Correspondent George Herman.

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